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MARVEL® COMICS GROUP
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MIGHTIEST MONARCH OF A TIME-LOST LAND!
KING CONAN
SEVERIN
KING OF THE FREAKS!

CIMMERIA'S NO ♪ MERRIER, ♫ AND OPHIR'S GOT THE GOLD, LADS!
WELL, THIS LAND OF OPHIR CAN KEEP HER GOLD, EH, WHITE TEMPEST?
ONCE WE'VE PUSHED THE TYBOR RIVER, YOU'LL TRAMPLE FAMILIAR SOIL BENEATH THOSE HOOVES AGAIN...
...AND IT'S BACK TO PLAYING KING OF AQUILONIA FOR ME.
WHOA--!
HNN
A PIT! WHAT SCURVY--!?
HNNNH
A HYBORIAN AGE CLASSIC BY:
ALAN ZELENETZ SCRIPT
RUDY NEBRES ART

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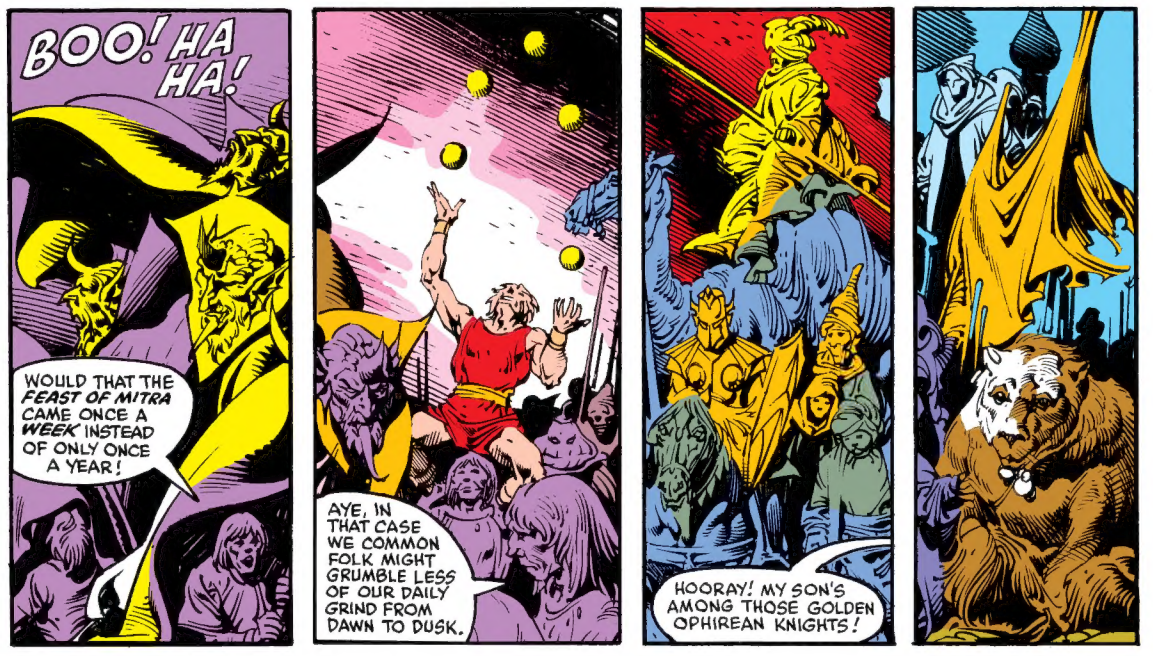
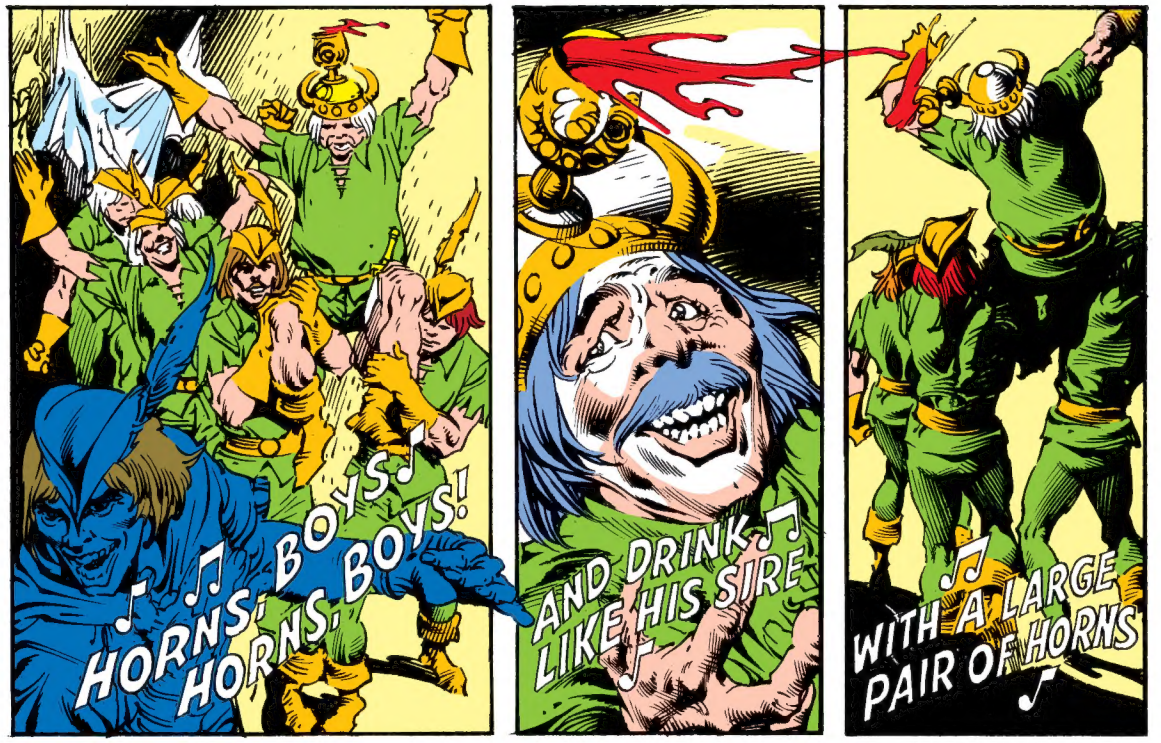
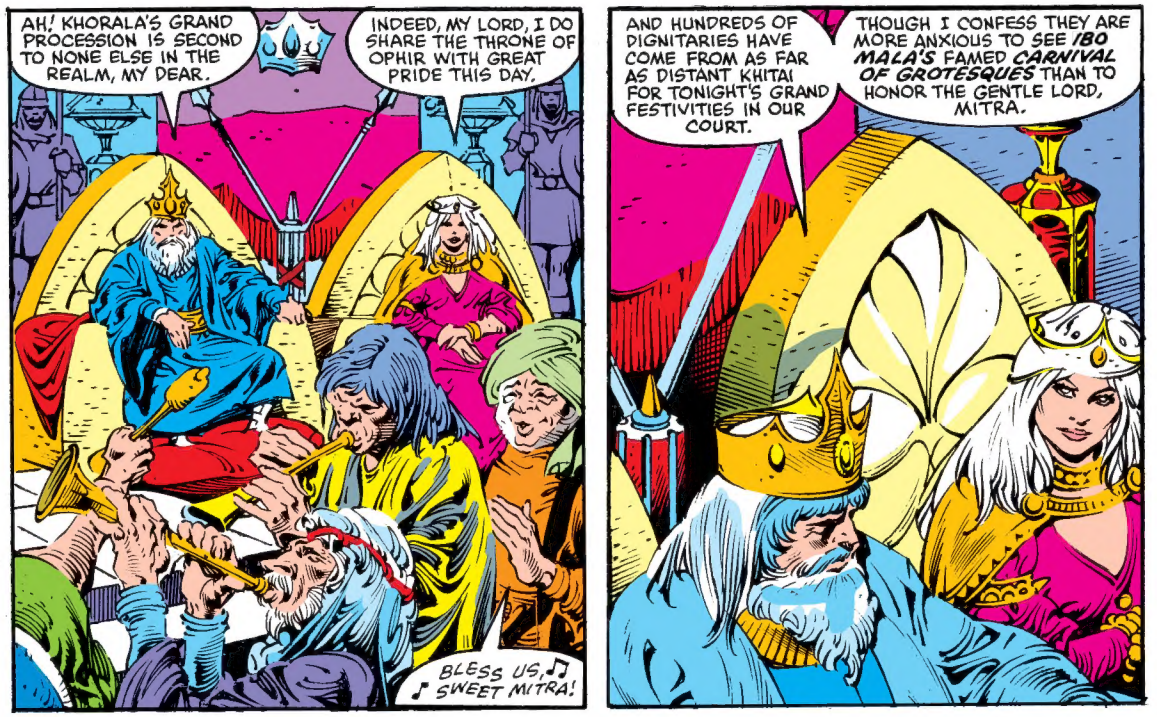
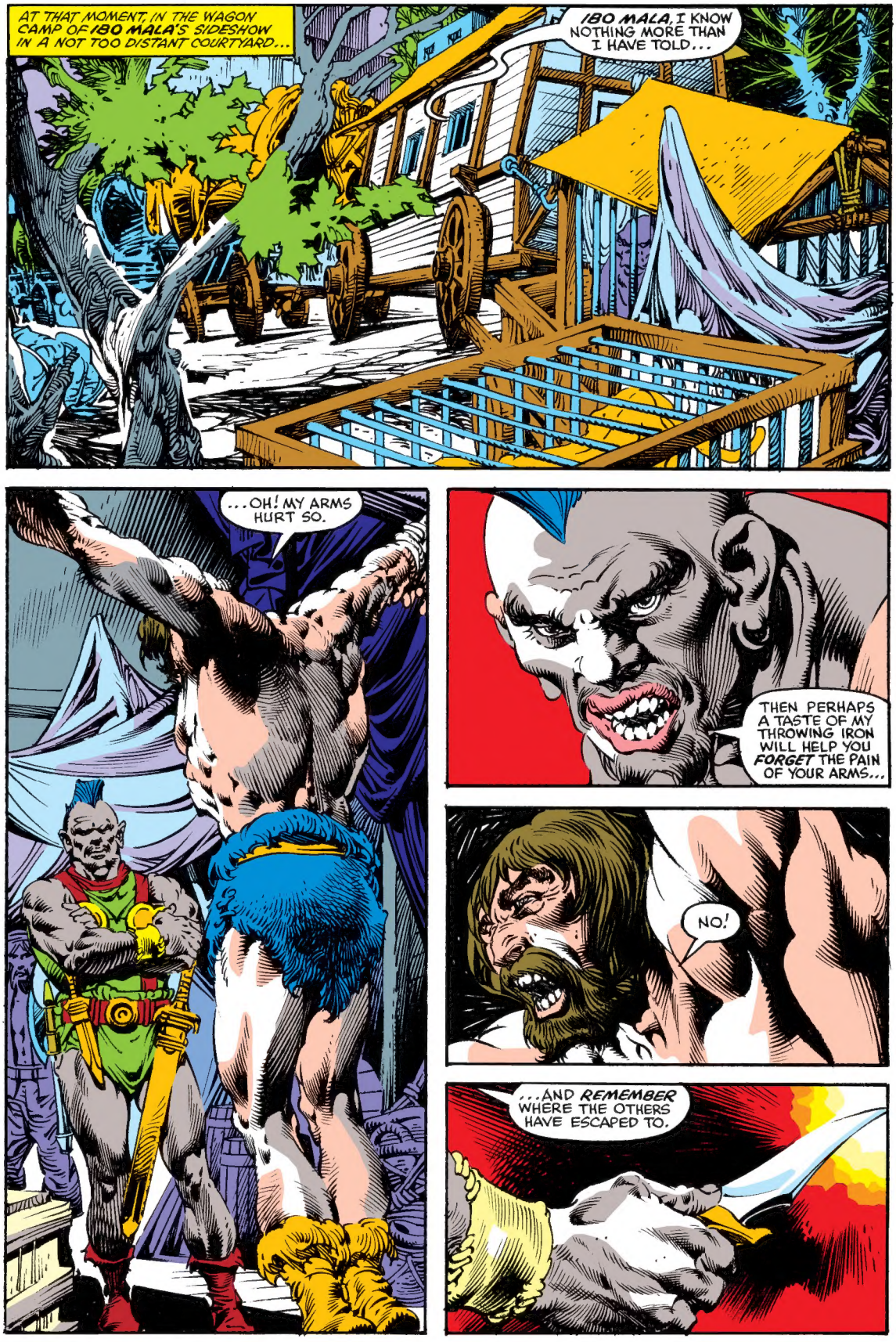
Stan Lee PRESENTS

THE DEVIL OF DARFAR


BOO! HA HA!
WOULD THAT THE FEAST OF MITRA CAME ONCE A WEEK INSTEAD OF ONLY ONCE A YEAR!
AYE, IN THAT CASE WE COMMON FOLK MIGHT GRUMBLE LESS OF OUR DAILY GRIND FROM DAWN TO DUSK.
HOORAY! MY SON'S AMONG THOSE GOLDEN OPHIREAN KNIGHTS!



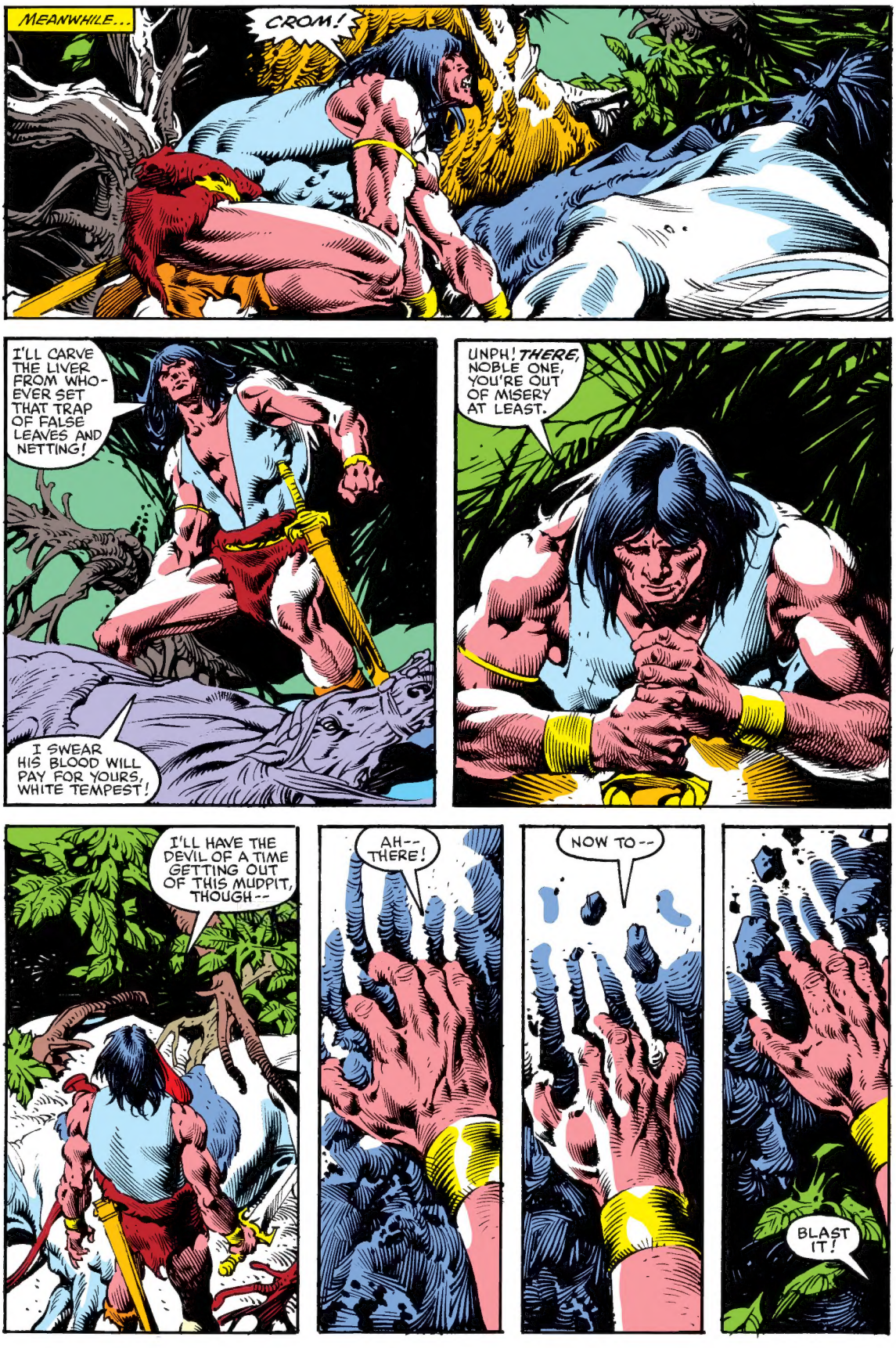

AH! KHORALA'S GRAND PROCESSION IS SECOND TO NONE ELSE IN THE REALM, MY DEAR.
INDEED, MY LORD, I DO SHARE THE THRONE OF OPHIR WITH GREAT PRIDE THIS DAY.
♫ BLESS US, ♫ SWEET MITRA!
AND HUNDREDS OF DIGNITARIES HAVE COME FROM AS FAR AS DISTANT KHITAI FOR TONIGHT'S GRAND FESTIVITIES IN OUR COURT.
THOUGH I CONFESS THEY ARE MORE ANXIOUS TO SEE IBO MALA'S FAMED CARNIVAL OF GROTESQUES THAN TO HONOR THE GENTLE LORD, MITRA.


AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE WAGON CAMP OF IBO MALA'S SIDESHOW IN A NOT TOO DISTANT COURTYARD...
IBO MALA, I KNOW NOTHING MORE THAN I HAVE TOLD...
...OH! MY ARMS HURT SO.
THEN PERHAPS A TASTE OF MY THROWING IRON WILL HELP YOU FORGET THE PAIN OF YOUR ARMS...
NO!
...AND REMEMBER WHERE THE OTHERS HAVE ESCAPED TO.

NOW, AGAIN, DOG-- WHERE DID MONTAGO TAKE MY SLAVES!?
SLIIT
I... DON'T KNOW...
WHERE!?
SLIIT
I WAS NOT AMONG THEM... I HEARD ONLY RUNNING...
MERCY, IBO MALA, MERCY!

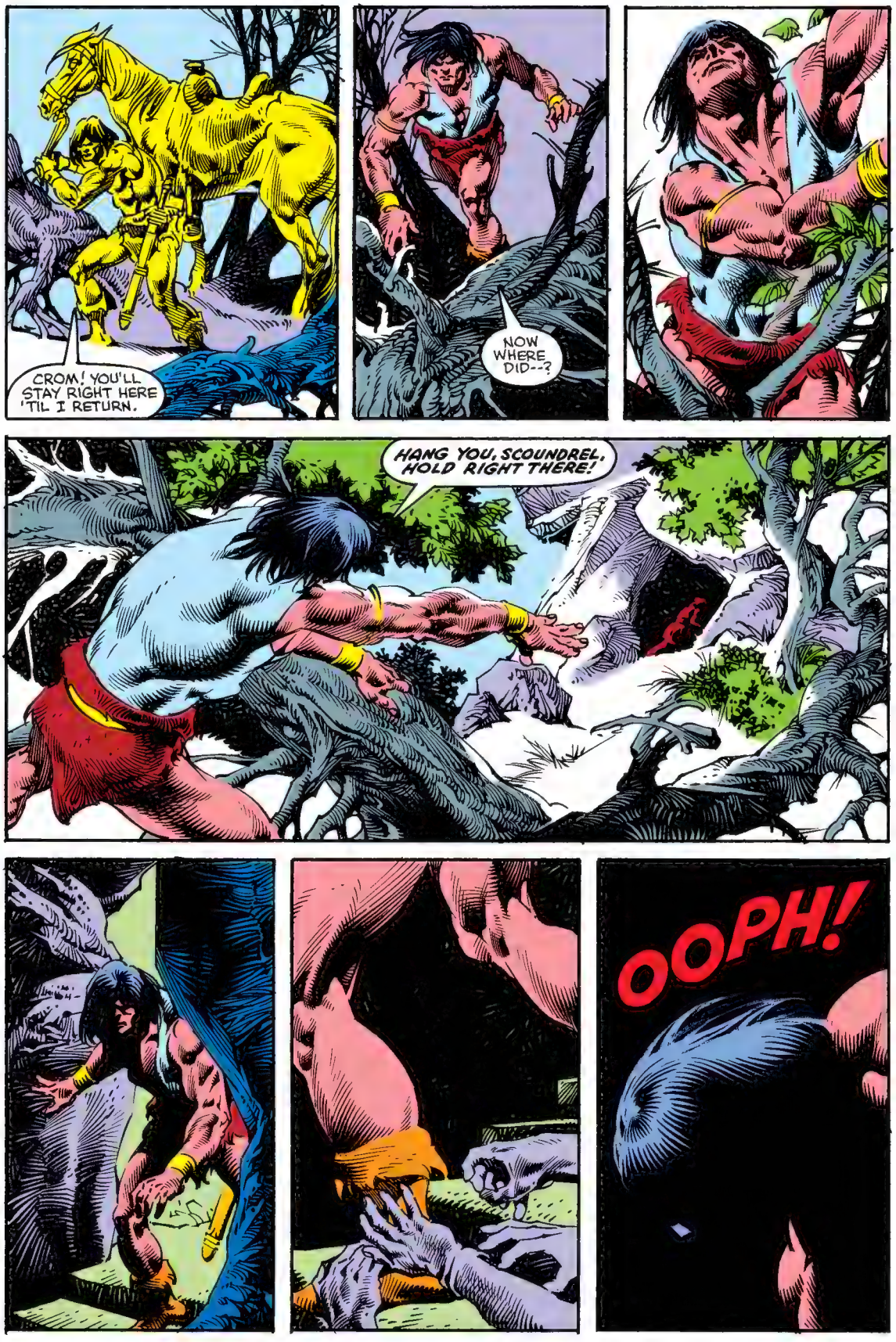
SO, THE MONGREL PLEADS MERCY!?
HERE, THEN IS YOUR--
--MERCY!
CUT THE COWARD DOWN. I'VE LEFT HIS HEART UN-TOUCHED. ROAST IT FOR ME.
WHERE ARE FUROS AND DAMON, THE TWO DOGS WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO BE ON WATCH WHEN THE ESCAPE OCCURRED?
THEY STILL SCOUR THE WOODS FOR THE MISSING SLAVES.

CURSE THEIR CARCASSES! DO THEY KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DIS-APPOINT THE KING THIS EVENING!?
COUNTLESS GOLD WILL BE LOST...
...AND LUXURIES I COULD NO LONGER DO WITHOUT...
...AND THE REPUTATION OF MY ENTERPRISE. ALL I'VE ACCOMPLISHED WILL BE RUINED, BY JHIL, *RUINED!*
NO.
I'LL SKIN FUROS AND DAMON RAW LIKE ANTELOPES IF THEY FAIL TO RETURN WITH MY GROTESQUES BY NIGHTFALL!


MEANWHILE...
CROM!
I'LL CARVE THE LIVER FROM WHO-EVER SET THAT TRAP OF FALSE LEAVES AND NETTING!
I SWEAR HIS BLOOD WILL PAY FOR YOURS, WHITE TEMPEST!
UNPH! THERE, NOBLE ONE, YOU'RE OUT OF MISERY AT LEAST.
I'LL HAVE THE DEVIL OF A TIME GETTING OUT OF THIS MUDPIT, THOUGH--
AH-- THERE!
NOW TO--
BLAST IT!

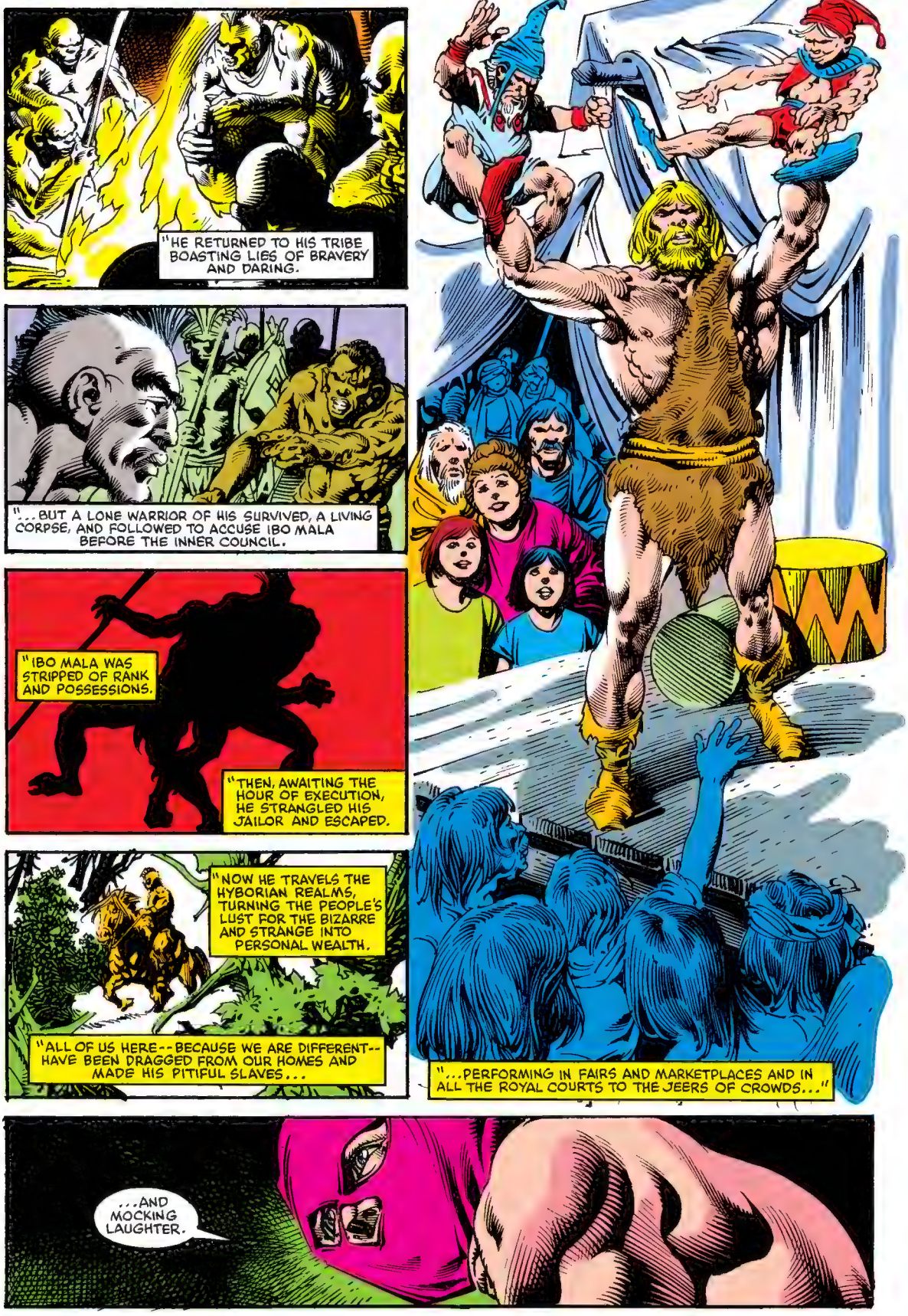
ABOVE THE PIT...
LOOK, DAMON, SOMETHING'S FALLEN INTO THE TRAP.
PRAY MITRA IT'S ONE OF THE RUN-AWAYS OR IBO MALA WILL HAVE OUR HEADS.
I'D SOONER BE BURNT TO ASHES ON AN ALTAR OF THE DARK SERPENT SET THAN HAVE IBO MALA GORGE HIMSELF ON MY FAT. IF HIS PAY WEREN'T SO BLASTED GOOD--
WELL, LET'S SEE IF WE'VE HAD LUCK--
UNFFH!
NAY, DOG-FACE, IT'S NOT ONE OF YOUR RUNAWAYS!
ONLY A BORN CIMMERIAN HILLMAN COULD CLIMB THAT WALL OF DIRT!
NOW YOU'LL ANSWER FOR THE DEATH OF A STALLION WORTH FIFTY OF YOUR KIND, SCUM!

YOU'VE A FLAPPING TONGUE, STRANGER, BUT THIS DAGGER WILL RELIEVE YOU OF IT!
IF MY TONGUE'S TOO LOOSE FOR YOU, TALK TO MY BLADE, YOU MISERABE JACKAL!
NOW I'LL SHEAR THE HEAD OFF YOUR DOG PARTNER--!?
HNNH
FLEE TO YOUR KENNEL, THEN, YOU CRINGING CUR!
WELL, THIS NAG WILL HAVE TO DO UNTIL--
SNAP
WHO'S THAT--?


CROM! YOU'LL STAY RIGHT HERE 'TIL I RETURN.
NOW WHERE DID--?
HANG YOU, SCOUNDREL, HOLD RIGHT THERE!
OOPH!

CROM! WHAT BLACK LUCK HAVE I TUMBLED INTO NOW!?
THE DEVIL ANSWER THAT!
THIS SWORD LAST HACKED A SCORE OF HYRKANIAN GUARDSMEN INTO A HEAP OF MANGLED CORPSES.*
* LAST ISH- JIM.
WOULD YOU TRY IT AGAINST YOUR LONE PICKAXE, DOGS!?

I AM MONTAGO. STAY YOUR STEEL, STRANGER, AND ACCEPT OUR APOLOGIES.
WE EXPECTED ONE OF IBO MALA'S MEN.
IBO MALA? THAT'S THE SECOND TIME I'VE HEARD THAT INFERNAL NAME THIS HOUR.
I GUTTED ONE OF HIS LACKEYS IN THE WOODS ABOVE. WHO IN DARK TARNATION IS THIS CUR?
MORE THAN A CUR, STRANGER-- IBO MALA'S A CURSED DEVIL IN MAN'S GUISE.
HE CAME UP FROM DARFAR, THE KINGDOM BESIDE KUSH, WHERE CANNIBAL TRIBESMEN PICK THE MEAT OFF HUMAN BONES LIKE GHOULS.
"YEARS AGO, IBO MALA COMMANDED THE WARRIORS OF DARFAR'S MOST POWERFUL CLAN.
"UNTIL ONE DAY UNWITTINGLY HE LED THEM INTO AN AMBUSH OF HATED FOES.
"ORDERING HIS MEN TO HOLD THEIR GROUND, HE HIMSELF FLED AND LEFT THEM TO BE BUTCHERED.


"HE RETURNED TO HIS TRIBE BOASTING LIES OF BRAVERY AND DARING.
"...BUT A LONE WARRIOR OF HIS SURVIVED, A LIVING CORPSE, AND FOLLOWED TO ACCUSE IBO MALA BEFORE THE INNER COUNCIL.
"IBO MALA WAS STRIPPED OF RANK AND POSSESSIONS.
"THEN, AWAITING THE HOUR OF EXECUTION, HE STRANGLED HIS JAILOR AND ESCAPED.
"NOW HE TRAVELS THE HYBORIAN REALMS, TURNING THE PEOPLE'S LUST FOR THE BIZARRE AND STRANGE INTO PERSONAL WEALTH.
"ALL OF US HERE--BECAUSE WE ARE DIFFERENT--HAVE BEEN DRAGGED FROM OUR HOMES AND MADE HIS PITIFUL SLAVES...
"...PERFORMING IN FAIRS AND MARKETPLACES AND IN ALL THE ROYAL COURTS TO THE JEERS OF CROWDS..."
...AND MOCKING LAUGHTER.

LIKE THE COWARD HE IS, IBO MALA IS A SERVILE FLATTERER TO THE NOBILITY HE COURTS, BUT A CRUEL TYRANT TO THOSE OF US HE HOLDS IN CHAINS.
THESE SCARS ARE UGLIER BY FAR THAN THAN THE MONSTROUS FACE I NOW CAN HIDE BENEATH THIS SACK...
...FOR I WAS BORN WITH TWISTED FEATURES. THEY COULD NOT BE HELPED.
THESE SCARS, HOWEVER, ARE THE PURPOSEFUL DESIGN OF AN EVIL MAN.
HOW DID YOU FREE YOURSELVES, THEN?
"LAST NIGHT, THROUGH OVERSIGHT, NONE LOCKED MY SHACKLES. I FEIGNED ILLNESS...
"...AND SOON OVERCAME MY GUARD...
"...THEN BROKE THE MANACLES OF AS MANY OF MY FELLOWS AS TIME ALLOWED.
"SO FEARFUL WERE THEY OF THE WICKED IBO MALA THEY AT FIRST REFUSED TO RUN, UNTIL THE NOISE OF OTHER GUARDS, RETURNING DRUNK FROM THE TAVERN, FRIGHTENED THEM INTO FOLLOWING ME.
"THUS HAS THE *DEVIL OF DARFAR* CRUSHED THEIR SPIRITS."

WELL YOU'LL DIE LIKE DOGS IF YOU STAY CRINGING IN THIS DARK HOLE.
"I WAS ALSO A SLAVE ONCE, IN THE FILTHY PIGPENS OF HYPERBOREA, UNTIL I SWUNG MY CHAINS INTO THE TEETH OF SOME LUCKLESS GUARDS AND RAN.
"THEN I CARVED MY WAY ACROSS THIS CONTINENT, AYE, AND OVER THE BLUE WAVES OF THE WESTERN OCEAN...
"...UNTIL ONE DAY KING NUMEDIDES OF AQUILONIA LAY IN HIS OWN BLOOD AT MY FEET, AND I CLAPPED HIS CROWN TO MY BROW.
"I AM KING CONAN, OF AQUILONIA.
"IBO MALA'S HENCHMEN CRIPPLED THE ROYAL STALLION GIVEN ME BY MY QUEEN, ZENOBIA, AS A LOVE TOKEN. I'D NEVER SEEN A HANDSOMER STEED."

FOR THAT ALONE I'D WRING THIS IBO MALA'S NECK 'TIL HIS VEINS BURST AT HIS TEMPLES!
TELL ME WHERE THE DEVIL'S PUT UP AND I'LL MAKE A PAIR OF BREECHES OF HIS SUNBURNT HIDE!
AYE, BE OUR KING, SIRE! FREE US FROM IBO MALA!
I WILL JOIN YOU, CONAN. IBO MALA IS ALREADY ON OUR TRAIL, AND WE CANNOT RUN FOREVER.
I WOULD ATTACK AND PUT AN END TO THE FEAR THAT WRACKS US.
THOUGH I AM UNSKILLED I HAVE STOLEN THE FALLEN GUARD'S SWORD.
AND I'LL GO AS WELL TO SQUIRM MYSELF WHERE YOU CANNOT, AND TO SNEAK ABOUT AFTER OUR ENEMIES.
FOR IBO MALA'S WAGONS OFTEN MOVE FROM DAY TO DAY.
CROM'S BEARD! THEN LET'S BE OFF BEFORE THE NIGHT'S WASTED IN CHATTER!

IT IS EVENING IN THE ROYAL COURT OF KHORALA, WHERE FESTIVITIES ARE LONG UNDER WAY...
THESE KUSHITE WRESTLERS ALREADY TAX MY COURT'S PATIENCE.
WHY DOES IBO MALA FORESTALL THE CARNIVAL AND MASQUE?
THE CROWD GROWS WEARY OF THE WRESTLERS, MASTER. THEY MURMUR--
A THOUSAND INFERNAL TORTURES ON DAMON AND FUROS! WHERE ARE MY GROTESQUES!?
THE WRESTLERS MUST CONTINUE-- THEY ARE OUR ONLY DIVERSION. BUT TIME RUNS SHORT.

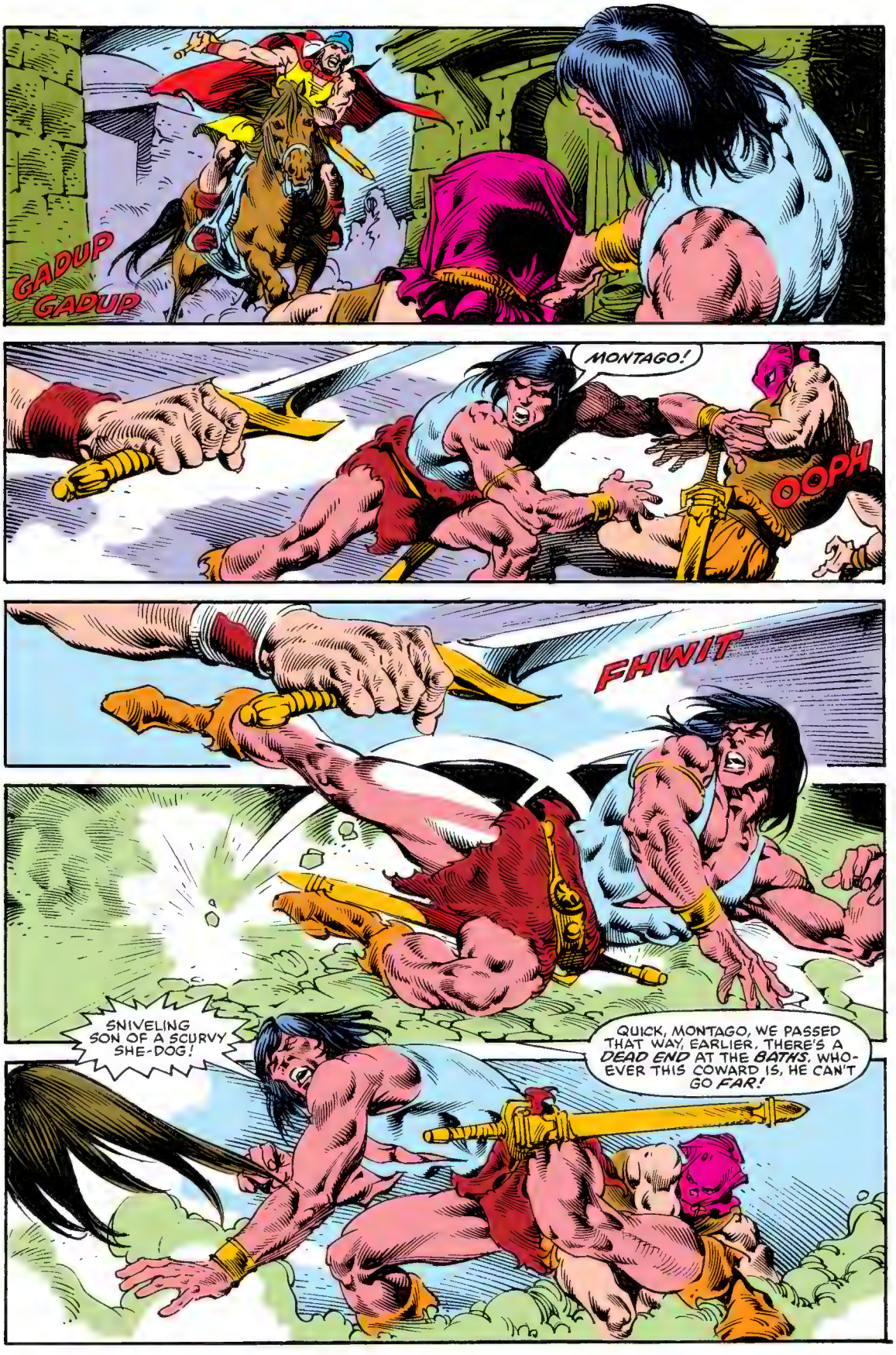
ARE THESE TWO SWEATY APES THE BEST OF OPHIR'S ENTERTAINMENT?
LET'S BE RID OF THEM ALREADY!
IT IS AN ANXIOUS AND BREATHLESS DAMON WHO ENTERS THE COURT AT THAT MOMENT...
...AND SEEKS OUT IBO MALA...
FUROS HAS BEEN SLAIN IN THE WOODS, MASTER! AND THE SLAVES...WE...WE COULD NOT FIND HIDE NOR HAIR OF THEM.
JHIL'S GUT!
IBO MALA!

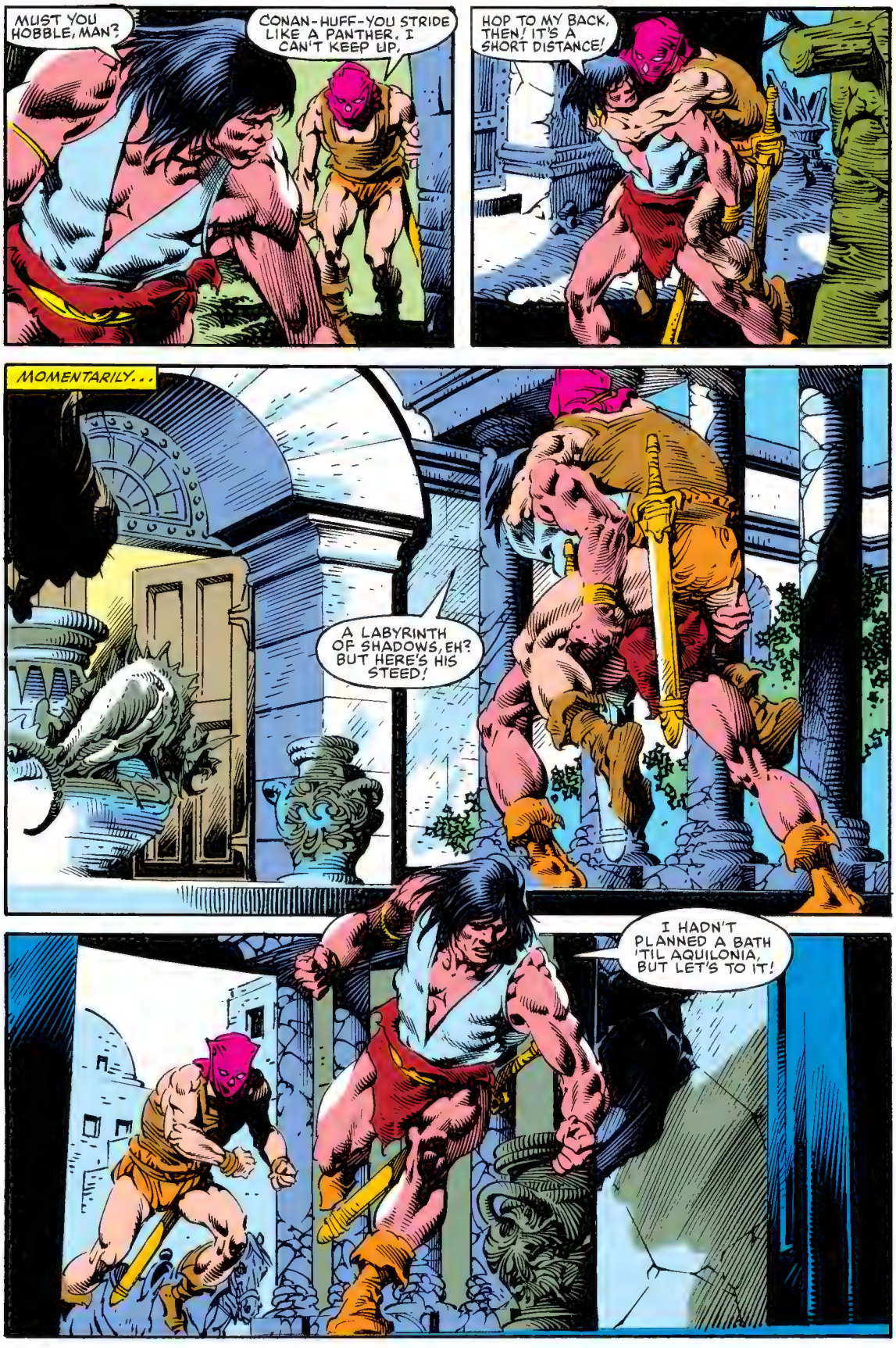
APPROACH THE THRONE, KNAVE!
WHAT--?
MOST HUMBLE APOLOGIES, MAJESTY, I CAN EXPLAIN--
SILENCE! BE YOU SO BRAZEN TO MAKE MOCKERY OF KHORALA'S THRONE BEFORE OUR HONORED GUESTS!?
YOU ARE BENEATH OUR CONTEMPT-- A SCOUNDREL AND A LIAR! QUIT OUR COURT-- YOUR GOLD IS FORFEIT THOUGH YOUR LIFE'S YET SPARED!
BUT DARE TO LURK WITHIN THE CAPITAL COME DAWN, THEN BY NIGHT-FALL OPHIR'S DOGS WILL GNAW YOUR BONES!
HA HA HA
I TAKE MY LEAVE MOST... HUMBLY, YOUR HIGHNESS.

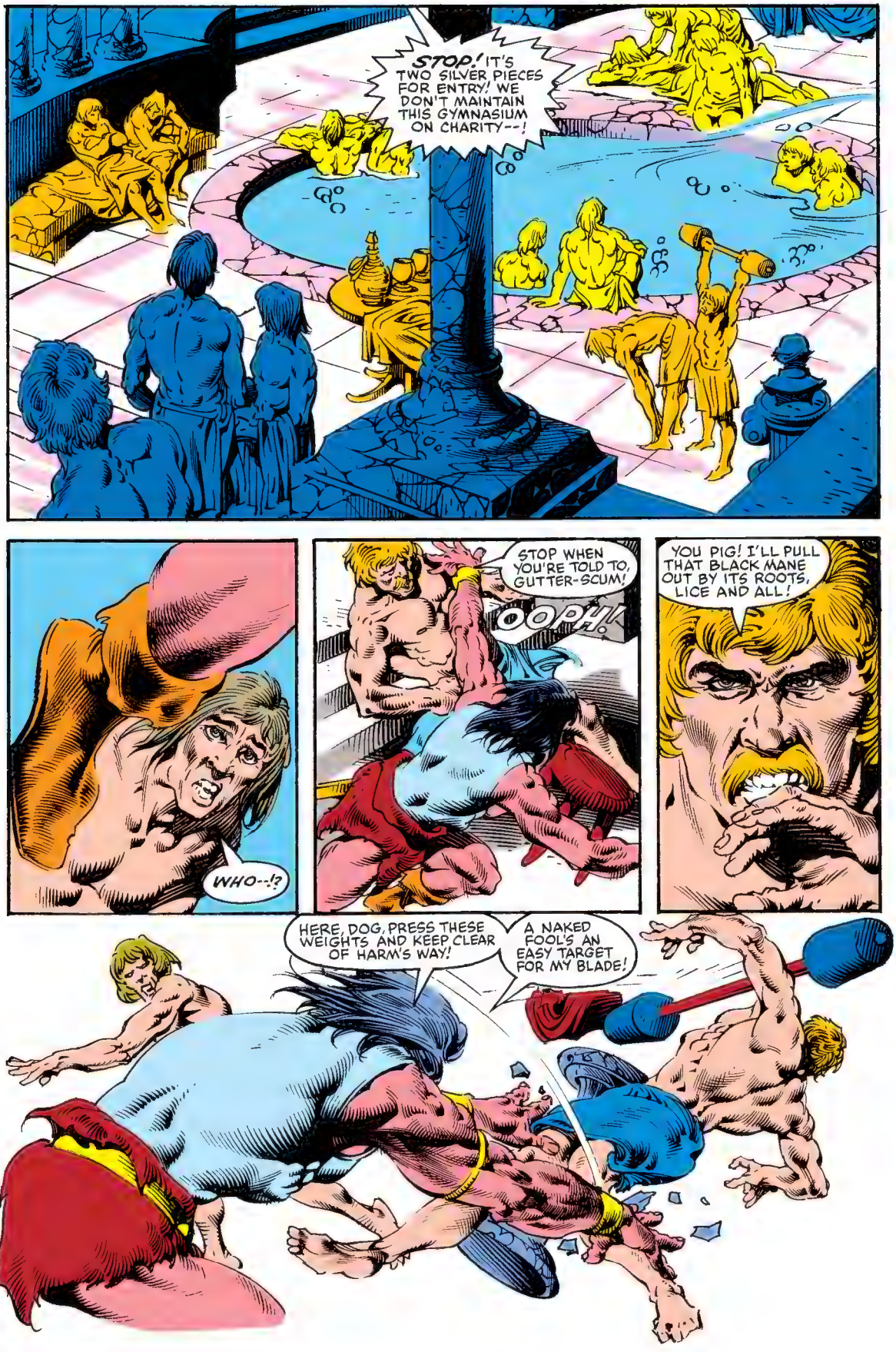
SO, DAMON, YOU VALUE IBO MALA'S FAME AND FORTUNE NO MORE THAN A RHINOCEROS HIDE--!
NO! NO, MASTER-- THE SLAVES DECEIVED US!
I'LL NOT DECEIVE YOU THEN, SLAVERING DOG!
NO!
UNPH
THUNK
WE FIND THOSE ESCAPED HOUNDS THIS NIGHT OR I'LL CRACK EVERY NECK AMONG YOU WRETCHES!

SOON, ARRIVING IN KHORALA...
DURING MITRA'S FEAST THE CITY DOES NOT SLEEP, CONAN. INDOORS, OUTDOORS, COURT, AND TAVERN--ENDLESS REVELRY.
I'LL SPY OUT IBO MALA'S CURRENT WHEREABOUTS. WAIT FOR ME HERE BEFORE THIS INN.
SWIFT AS A DEVIL, DWARF--I'D MAKE SHORT SHRIFT OF THIS ROGUISH ESCAPADE!
FOR THERE'S AN AUBURN BEAUTY AND A STRAPPING PRINCE OF A LAD WAITING FOR ME BACK HOME.
AND THUS, WITH A BLOW, THE FIERCE DRAGON IS DEAD!
O, BRAVE KNIGHT, I OWE THEE MY LIFE!
THEN PROMISE WITHIN THE NEW MOON WE'LL BE WED!
HA! HA!
BY MITRA, I SHALL BE THY WIFE!
HOORAY

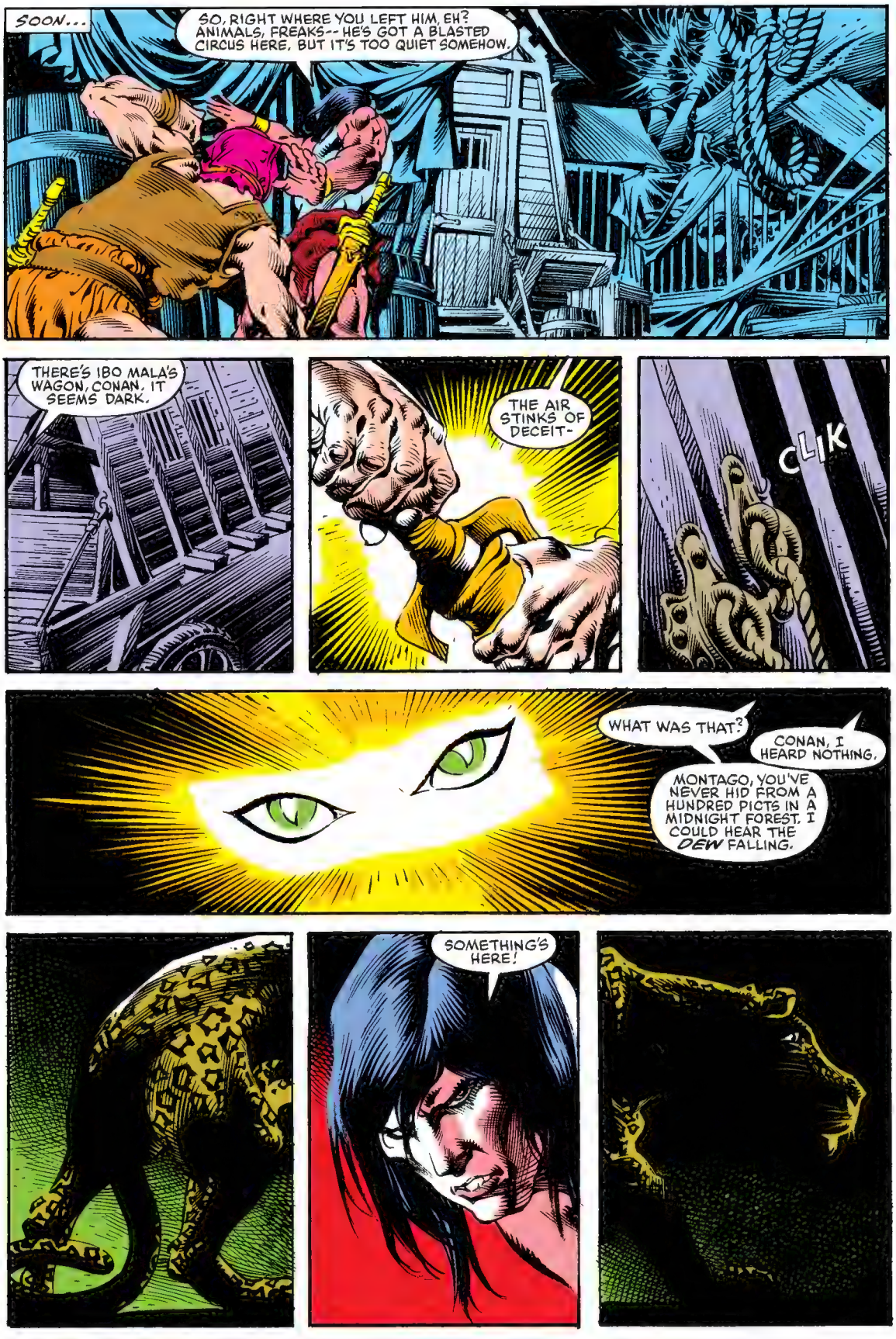
HA! I'D WON A LION'S SHARE OF WENCHES MYSELF STICKING A DRAGON OR TWO IN MY YOUTH!
NOT I, CONAN. NO SOFT-SKINNED CREATURE WOULD DARE SET EYES UPON THIS MONSTROUS FACE.
CROM! WHO CARES *WHAT* YOU LOOK LIKE UNDER THAT SACK?
YOU'VE A NOBLE HEART, MONTAGO, AND AFTER THIS NIGHT WE'LL FIND YOU A WORTHY WENCH, I WAGER.
WELL, THE CROWD DRAWS INDOORS FOR WINE AND ALE. I COULD DROWN MY OWN PARCHED THROAT IN A FEW SPICED TANKARDS.
WHAT'S KEEPING OUR DWARF?
GADUP GADUP
WHAT--!?


GADUP
GADUP
MONTAGO!
OOPH
FHWIT
SNIVELING SON OF A SCURVY SHE-DOG!
QUICK, MONTAGO, WE PASSED THAT WAY, EARLIER. THERE'S A DEAD END AT THE BATHS. WHOEVER THIS COWARD IS, HE CAN'T GO FAR!

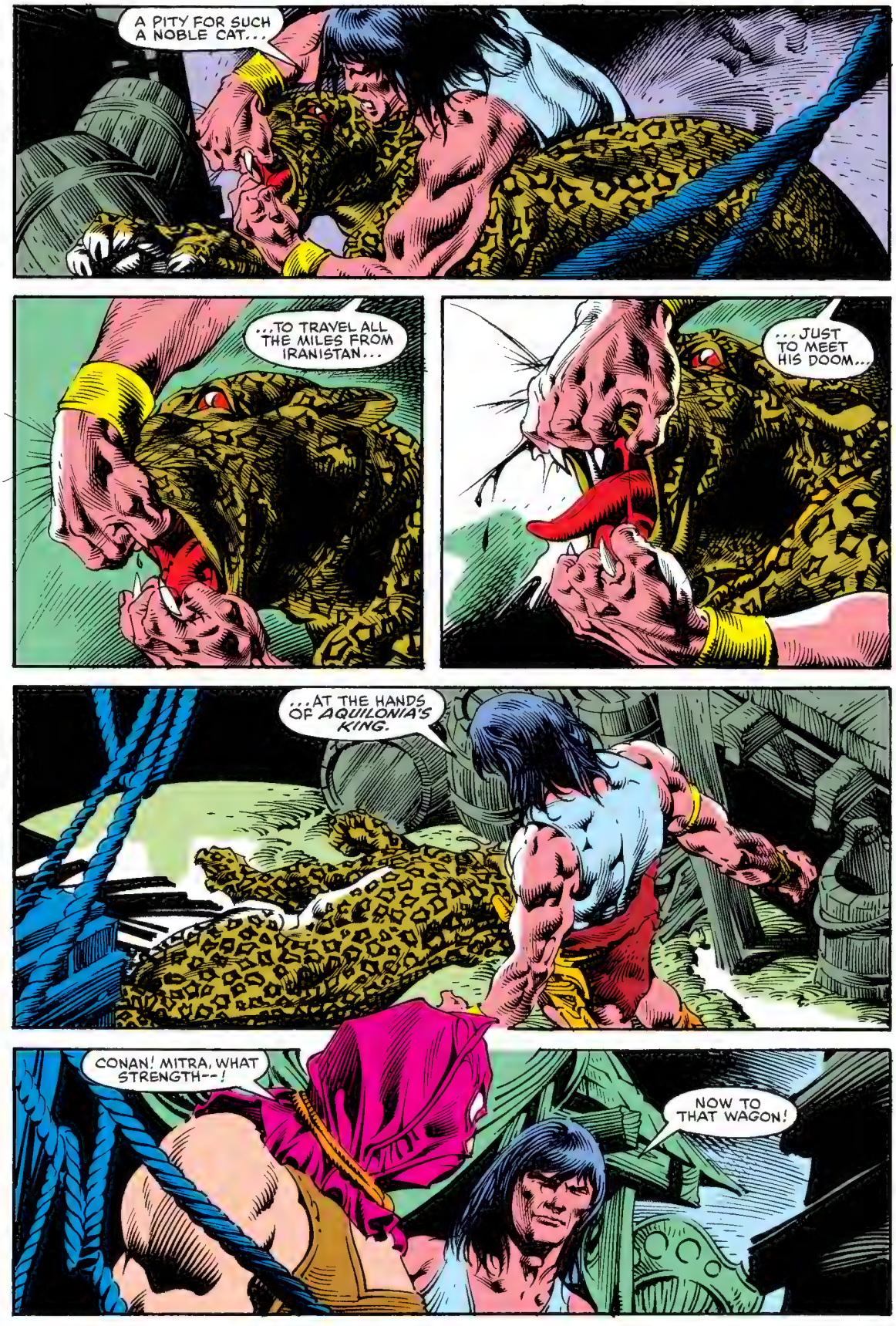

MUST YOU HOBBLE, MAN?
CONAN-HUFF-YOU STRIDE LIKE A PANTHER. I CAN'T KEEP UP.
HOP TO MY BACK, THEN! IT'S A SHORT DISTANCE!
MOMENTARILY...
A LABYRINTH OF SHADOWS, EH? BUT HERE'S HIS STEED!
I HADN'T PLANNED A BATH 'TIL AQUILONIA, BUT LET'S TO IT!

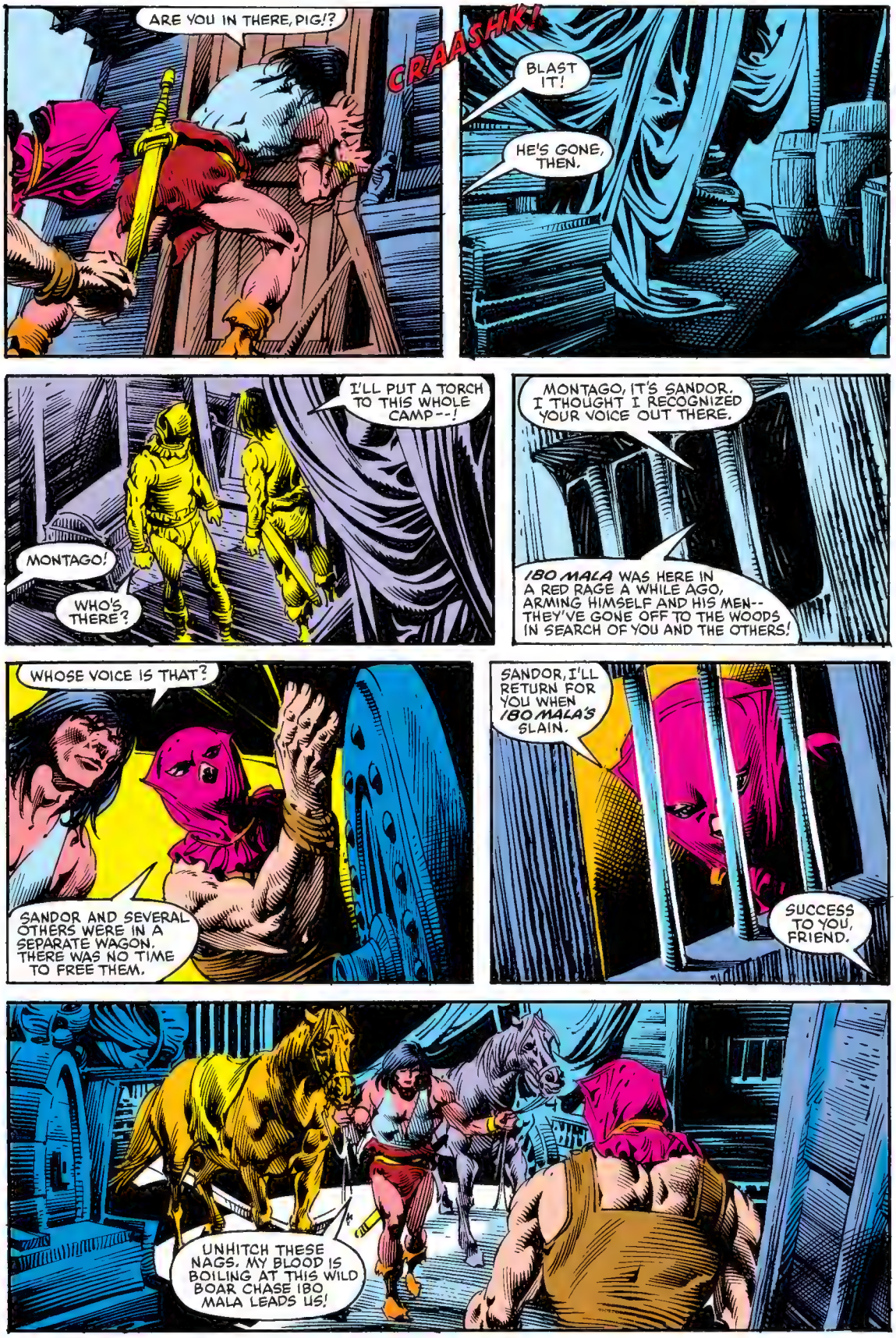

STOP! IT'S TWO SILVER PIECES FOR ENTRY! WE DON'T MAINTAIN THIS GYMNASIUM ON CHARITY--!
WHO--!?
STOP WHEN YOU'RE TOLD TO, GUTTER-SCUM!
OOPH!
YOU PIG! I'LL PULL THAT BLACK MANE OUT BY ITS ROOTS, LICE AND ALL!
HERE, DOG, PRESS THESE WEIGHTS AND KEEP CLEAR OF HARM'S WAY!
A NAKED FOOL'S AN EASY TARGET FOR MY BLADE!

THAT RED COAT, MONTAGO! OUR MYSTERIOUS ATTACKER CAN ONLY BE...
PLAASH
I'D HAVE PREFERRED HIM WITH A WAGGING TONGUE ABLE TO TELL US--
IT'S ONE OF 180 MALA'S MEN.
ANOTHER HIRED DOG, EH? BLAST! THEY MUST HAVE CAUGHT OUR DWARF SPY!
SHOW ME THE WAY TO THE DEVIL'S LAST CAMP--HE MAY STILL BE THERE. THE LONGER THIS NIGHT LASTS, THE LONGER MY STEEL ACHES FOR THE CUR'S BELLY!


SOON...
SO, RIGHT WHERE YOU LEFT HIM, EH? ANIMALS, FREAKS-- HE'S GOT A BLASTED CIRCUS HERE, BUT IT'S TOO QUIET SOMEHOW.
THERE'S IBO MALA'S WAGON, CONAN. IT SEEMS DARK.
THE AIR STINKS OF DECEIT-
CLIK
WHAT WAS THAT?
CONAN, I HEARD NOTHING.
MONTAGO, YOU'VE NEVER HID FROM A HUNDRED PICTS IN A MIDNIGHT FOREST. I COULD HEAR THE DEW FALLING.
SOMETHING'S HERE!

A CHEETAH! MONTAGO, OUT OF THE WAY!
TSSSS!
UNHH!
SKRIT!
HA! THERE'S WHERE I WANT YOU, SPOTTED FURY!


A PITY FOR SUCH A NOBLE CAT...
...TO TRAVEL ALL THE MILES FROM IRANISTAN...
...JUST TO MEET HIS DOOM...
...AT THE HANDS OF AQUILONIA'S KING.
CONAN! MITRA, WHAT STRENGTH--!
NOW TO THAT WAGON!


ARE YOU IN THERE, PIG!?
CRAASHK!
BLAST IT!
HE'S GONE, THEN.
I'LL PUT A TORCH TO THIS WHOLE CAMP--!
MONTAGO!
WHO'S THERE?
MONTAGO, IT'S SANDOR. I THOUGHT I RECOGNIZED YOUR VOICE OUT THERE.
IBO MALA WAS HERE IN A RED RAGE A WHILE AGO, ARMING HIMSELF AND HIS MEN--THEY'VE GONE OFF TO THE WOODS IN SEARCH OF YOU AND THE OTHERS!
WHOSE VOICE IS THAT?
SANDOR AND SEVERAL OTHERS WERE IN A SEPARATE WAGON. THERE WAS NO TIME TO FREE THEM.
SANDOR, I'LL RETURN FOR YOU WHEN IBO MALA'S SLAIN.
SUCCESS TO YOU, FRIEND.
UNHITCH THESE NAGS. MY BLOOD IS BOILING AT THIS WILD BOAR CHASE IBO MALA LEADS US!

A WHILE LATER, IN THE FOREST...
HAVE YOU SMOKED OUT ALL THE SLAVERING DOGS!?
HERE ARE THE LAST OF THEM!
COFF
COUGH
IBO MALA, WE ARE YOURS--!
BY JHIL'S HOLY GUT, YOU'LL NEVER RUN FROM ME AGAIN, SHACKLED SCUM!
SHWACK!
IBO MALA, THERE ARE HORSES COMING--!
SO, WE'VE FOUND IBO MALA, THE DEVIL OF DARFAR AT LAST, MONTAGO!

BLASPHEMER! DARE YOU UTTER IBO MALA'S NAME!?
HWIT
I'VE A YARD OF COLD AQUILONIAN STEEL TO ANSWER THAT BLADE, SCUM!
BRING ME HIS TWISTED GUTS, DOGS!
HAI!

I'LL UNBOWEL YOUR WHINING PUPS FIRST, IBO MALA--
--AND THEN I'LL SCATTER YOU LIMB BY LIMB TO THE WINDS!
CONAN, I'VE STOOD BY WATCHING YOUR COURAGE LONG ENOUGH. I WILL ASSIST!
HO! WOULD YOU FLEE WITH YOUR TAIL BETWEEN YOUR LEGS LIKE A CRAVEN JACKAL!?
NEVER!
HNNH
UMPH

VERY WELL.
YOU... UNWASHED, ILLITERATE BARBARIAN SCUM! YOU AID IN THE DISSENSION OF MY GROTESQUES... YOU RUIN MY STANDING AMONG KINGS... THEN YOU DARE HOUND ME TO DAMNATION?!?
I KNOW NOT WHAT IN JHIL'S NAME I'VE EVER DONE TO YOU, STRANGER, BUT KNOW YE THIS...
...THE FIRE RAGING WITHIN MY BREAST IS ONE THAT KNOWS NEITHER HEIGHT NOR DEPTH, NOR SHALL IT EVER BE SATIATED BY LESS THAN YOUR STINKING CARCASS, DRIPPING RED BLOOD...
...FROM THE WAR-AXE OF IBO MALA!
HEAR ME, THEN:
IN THE YEARS SINCE I STOLE OUT OF MY VILLAGE IN CIMMERIA I HAVE DEVOTED MY LIFE TO NO CAUSE, NO KING, NO GOD...
...AND YET, IN MY YOUTHFUL PURSUIT OF SELF-GLORIFICATION NEVER ONCE HAVE I ENSLAVED OTHERS... NO MAN DID I WANTONLY SLAY!
WERE IT NOT FOR THE DEATH OF MY STEED... WERE IT NOT FOR YOUR RED JACKAL'S ATTEMPT ON MY LIFE; HAD OUR PATHS NEVER CROSSED, STILL WOULD I CHAMPION THE CAUSE OF THOSE MISFORTUNATES WITHIN YOUR GRASP.
SO KNOW YOU, DEVIL, THE LIBERATOR OF YOUR SLAVES... THE SWIFT VENGEANCE OF THOSE YOU'VE OPPRESSED... YOUR RED DEATH IS...
...CONAN, KING OF AQUILONIA!

--FOR THE DEATH OF WHITE TEMPEST...
...FOR THE BLOOD OF YOUR GROTESQUES...
...AND FOR THE DAMNABLE DECEIT OF THIS BLACK NIGHT!
OOPH
HA! PRAY TO YOUR DEMON GOD JHIL, PIG!

NO!
SINCE THE ASSASSIN HORSE-MAN I HIRED AND THE CHEETAH I SET FREE DID NOT SUCCEED IN KILLING YOU, I SHALL DO SO MYSELF!
CONAN! YOU'VE SAVED ME MORE THAN ONCE THIS NIGHT--
I'LL-- AARGH!
MONTAGO!
BLAST YOU, DWARF! I'LL DASH YOUR BRAINS ON THE GROUND!

MONTAGO! A NOBLE HERO'S DEATH, FRIEND. INDEED, YOU WERE A KING AMONG YOUR KIND.
NOW, *180 MALA*, THESE WOODS WILL REEK OF YOUR BASE BLOOD -- WHAT!?
HE FLED DURING THE COMMOTION, CONAN!
TO BLACK PERDITION THEN WITH HIM!
HAVE NO FEAR. I'LL UNSHACKLE THE LOT OF YOU AND LEAD YOU TO YOUR FREEDOM IN AQUILONIA. BUT BEFORE WE SET OFF ON OUR DAWN JOURNEY, LET'S LAY THIS NOBLE MONTAGO TO REST.
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GEORGE ROUSSOS COLORIST
JIM OWSLEY EDITOR
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KING CONAN

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THE MARC SILVESTRI INTERVIEW

...didn't quite work out. What was supposed to go here, next to this set of in-production pencil work from **KING CONAN #19**, was an interview I conducted with **Marc** over the phone sometime last March. Ma Bell changed all that. You see, **Marc** hails from Chicago, Illinois. This editor, firmly ensconced within the wilds of New York City, punched up **Marc's** number, and was presented with a connection that was somewhat... well... it went like this...

JIM OWSLEY: *So, Marc, how did you get your start in comics?*

MARC SILVESTRI: Buzz, frazzle-frazzle squawk crackle fizz.

J.O.: *And who, specifically are your influences?*

M.S.: Whoozat, frazzle frazzle buzz fizz Crackle Vhoot!

J.O.: *You're pulling my leg, right?*

M.S.: Zno! Crackle Vhoot!

J.O.: *Really?* ***The*** *Crackle Vhoot...?*

Well, you get the point. Reach out and confuse someone. Anyway, the Dreaded Deadline Doom loomed ever nearer, so I was forced to scrap the interview, and instead here I am again yacking away like last time. As usual, I am not at a loss for words...

A couple of interesting things are coming up next issue; not the least of which is penciler **Marc Silvestri's** return to these pages. Having fully recovered from post-Dreaded Deadline Doom neurosis, **Marc** has turned in some of the best work of his career. The coming major changes in **KING CONAN**'s direction has fired a new spark in **Marc's** creative inertia, and next issue he explodes all over these pages with a fresh concept and a new approach. **KING CONAN** has *never* looked better. Add to this the debut of new inker **Mike Gustovich** (you've seen his work on **THE NEW MUTANTS**), and what you're left with is, well, in a word, **awesome**. Please don't drool on the pages.

Speaking of drooling, check out **Marc's** breathtaking rendition of Queen Zenobia. She's got to be the foxiest kidnap victim Stan Lee's ever presented. You see, a band of pirates kidnap Zenobia and hold her for ransom. Not too bright, eh? Considering the yet-uncivilized barbarian king hot on the abductor's trail has absolutely no intention of paying the pirates. Not *gold,* anyway. Don't miss this one, folks. Stake out your local store now. Try setting up an inconspicuous tent nearby and clock the delivery truck. You'll be glad you did.

Another interesting thing about **KING CONAN #19** is it marks the return of your comments and critiques to this column. Yes, we're bringing back a *letters* page. You send 'em, we print 'em. That's the deal. Start flooding your local post office now.

Michael Fleisher and **John Buscema** are really getting around this month. **CONAN #150's** "Tower Of Flame" features an eerie tale of the supernatural with Mr. **Ernie Chan** as the finisher. Meanwhile, **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #91** features a Hyborian war story called "Forest Of Fiends". It features the much-demanded return of **Pablo Marcos** as finisher/dilineator, and a painting by **Mike Kaluta**. Oh, incidentally, **SAVAGE SWORD #91** also carries a backup story or two written by none other than yours truly.

Well, I'd better muzzle it for now. Suffice it to say that if you've never been into sword and sorcery before; if you've never thought a barbarian book was for you, we're out to prove you dead wrong. . This is *still* the Marvel Age of comics. All other comics eat quiche. See you in sixty.

Oh, by the way, I still can't talk about **KING CONAN #20**. However, I can tell you *when* I will be able to talk about this landmark, ground-breaking event... next issue. In the meantime, start setting up those tents.